

CAR OF POWDER ATTACHED TO TRIP EXPLODES, KILLING 83 MEN AT WILKES-BARRE

Many Who Escape Being Torn Asunder Fall Victims of Flames and Fumes While Attempting to Crawl to Safety; Catastrophe Follows Night of Festivity Over Return of Soldier Regiment.

ACCIDENT ONE OF WORST IN REGION'S HISTORY

WILKES-BARRE, Pa., June 5.—Eighty-three men lost their lives this morning as the result of an explosion of blasting powder in a car attached to a train load of miners being transported to their work in Baltimore No. 2 mine of the Delaware & Hudson Coal company, while at least 31 were injured, according to a list given out by the company officials at noon.

More than 100 mine workers were riding to their work, crowded into what is known as a trip of mine cars drawn by a motor. The rear car carried 12 kegs of black-powder used for blasting loose the coal in the chambers. The mine is modern and equipped electrically. The trolley wire snapped when the train had gone about 200 feet from the entrance. The wire sputtered and sizzled and the sparks emitted touched off the powder.

The terrified men on the cars instantly were aware of the danger that confronted them, but they stood powerless to avert it.

There was a roar and in an instant every man and boy on the train was either dead or dying. Terribly mangled bodies were found everywhere by the rescue crews which instantly rushed into the mine. Fire fighters working frantically succeeded in an incredibly short time in subduing the flames which followed the blast.

Flames caused the greater loss of life. Many of the bodies were burned to a crisp. Other men who were burned and were trying to reach safety died of suffocation. When rescuers reached the tunnel there were dead and dying scattered everywhere. The injured were rapidly removed and sent to hospitals as quick as ambulances could be provided and the dead were brought out and placed in tiers on the green.

Doctors and nurses were somewhat late in arriving on the scene. This was because many of them were abed when the accident happened. Hospitals quickly filled and morgues were filled to overflowing.

Then came the gruesome work of taking out the dead and injured. Those who had not already succumbed were so badly burned that in nearly every case death is a matter of a short time.

Carelessness and violation of the mine laws of the state caused the great loss of life. One of the most drastic provisions of the authentic mine code is the section forbidding the transportation of men on a car or train which carries explosives. Yet the train of little cars conveying its freight of miners had attached to its rear a dozen kegs of powder. Investigation will disclose whether the men or the company is responsible for the violation of the law.

Some of the first bodies brought from the tunnel were burning when they reached the surface. Clothes had been burned away and the flesh was roasting from the intense heat. Water was poured on these to put out the fire. It was such sights as this that made brave hearts turn sick.

Company employees state that there is a "pull" of 186,000 cubic feet of air per minute in the tunnel and that the air pulled in the flames from the powder directly over the men. Alongside of the tunnel there is a creek and after the flash of the flames some men who were walking along the side of the cars dropped into the water and saved their lives. Several employees state that it was not the force of the explosion that killed the men. Flames and the lack of air caused all the fatalities. All admit that the accident was the result of the violation of the law but they state that miners are accustomed to these violations.

Thomas Dougherty, a miner, one of the survivors who was thrown out of the car by the blast and saved himself by jumping into a ditch. He said:

"We were riding along about 50 feet in the tunnel. There was a blinding flash. I was thrown from the car. I saw the water and I hurried myself into it. Bodies were all about. Some I know were dead; others were dying. The flames were terrific. They were all about. We were in a veritable hell. No man could possibly hope to escape with his life unless he got into the water, buried his face and rolled over and over as I did. There was powder in the car. There were about 10 kegs and besides there were kegs carried by the men. Of course I do not know what set them off, but I believe that the trolley wire broke and the sparks ignited the powder."

But last night was the scene of great gaiety. That section of the mine welcomed home boys of the 311th Field Artillery. They were flying, red fire burned, people laughed and shouted. Within 12 hours all was changed, many homes being made sad. Some of the soldiers had their joy turned into grief. Their fathers were among the dead.

The relatives and to give them news, but the scene is pitiful.

The death list was made large by the flames and sulphur fumes which filled the tunnel. The fire did not last long, but it was long enough to make a heavy death toll. Many were killed outright. Parts of bodies were found in the wreckage of life and property. Rescuers got into the mine with hose and played streams of water on the flames. While they were doing this the cries of the dying and the injured were heard above the roar of the flames.

REPUBLIC AT CAPACITY

Steel Company on Full Run First Time Since November 11.

YOUNGSTOWN, O., June 10.—For the first time since the armistice was signed the Republic Iron & Steel company will operate at 100 per cent capacity this week, officials announce. There is a big demand in the district for plates, pipe, fencing and wire products. An order for 2,000 tons of plates has just been placed.

LIST OF COKE OVENS IN THE CONNELLSVILLE DISTRICT

With Their Owners, Address and Ovens in Blast Corrected to Saturday June 7, 1919.

Ovens	In Works	Name of Operators	Address
MERCHANT OVENS			
122	Beatty	Mt. Pleasant Coke Co.	Greensburg
123	Brum	Brum Run Coke Company	Mt. Pleasant
150	Clare	Clare Coke Co.	Greensburg
49	Ellen No. 1	Whitel Coke Co.	Uniontown
59	Ellen No. 2	Whitel Coke Co.	Uniontown
100	Ellen Grove	W. J. Rainey	New York
80	Port Hill	W. J. Rainey	New York
10	Franklin	Summit-Cville Coke Co.	Connellsville
101	Gilmore	Gilmore Coke Co.	Uniontown
80	Grass	W. J. Rainey	New York
8	Helen	Samuel I. Lear	Youngwood
116	Humphrey	Hecla Coal & Coke Co.	Pittsburg
272	Mt. Braddock	W. J. Rainey	New York
210	Mt. Pleasant	Mt. Pleasant Coke Co.	Greensburg
32	Nellis	Brownfield Coal & Coke Co.	Uniontown
33	Nellis	Brown & Cochran	Dawson
30	Paul	W. J. Rainey	New York
100	Reverly	W. J. Rainey	New York
40	Thomas	Whitel Coke Co.	Uniontown
57	West Penn	West Penn Coke Co.	Pittsburg
2,210	1,177		
FURNACE OVENS			
260	Adelaide	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
358	Alverson	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
327	Bagsley	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
200	Bitner	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
240	Brinkerton	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
380	Buckeye	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
450	Calumet	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
301	Central	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
400	Collier	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
480	Continental 1	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
326	Continental 2	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
300	Continental 3	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
120	Crossland	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
333	Dorothy	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
230	Dorothy	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
272	Hecla No. 1	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
450	Hecla No. 2	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
290	Hecla No. 3	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
353	Hostetter	Hostetter-Cville Coke Co.	Pittsburg
250	Junata	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
306	Kyle	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
419	Leah	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
502	Leasburg 2	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
502	Leasburg 3	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
304	Leith	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
427	Lemont No. 1	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
360	Lemont No. 2	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
509	Mammoth	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
400	Marguerite	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
120	Mutual	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
258	Oliphant	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
328	Oliver No. 1	Oliver & Snyder Steel Co.	Pittsburg
183	Oliver No. 2	Oliver & Snyder Steel Co.	Pittsburg
200	Oliver No. 3	Oliver & Snyder Steel Co.	Pittsburg
400	Phillips	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
143	Redstone	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
448	Shelby	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
428	Southwest 1	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
180	Southwest 2	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
254	Southwest 3	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
301	Standard	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
110	Stewart	Dunbar Furnace Co.	Dunbar
80	Stewart	Stewart Iron Co.	Uniontown
484	Trotter	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
450	Union	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
200	Valley	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
352	Whitney	Hostetter-Cville Coke Co.	Pittsburg
500	Whitney	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
500	Yorkton	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
218	Youngstown	H. C. Frick Coke Co.	Pittsburg
16,920	8,214		

WARDLAW INVITES ATTENTION TO HIS MINE SAFETY RULES

Adherence to Scotland's Man's Code Would Have Prevented Catastrophe at Wilkes-Barre.

"I would not allow any one to ride in the first few wagons, nor ride on the sides or between wagons, nor get on or off while the trips are in motion. I would not allow any crowding in the wagons, nor any tools in the same wagons as the men nor any explosives in the same trips with the men."

The above is taken from "Mining in a Nutshell," of which James Wardlaw, Sr., of Scotland, is the author and to which attention is called by Mr. Wardlaw at this time because of the explosion last week in a mine of the Delaware & Hudson Coal company at Wilkes-Barre which caused the deaths of 83 miners and injury to many others, the catastrophe being caused by the explosion of powder in a car in the trip on which the men were riding to their work in the mine.

Various causes of the explosion have been put forth, among them being the sagging of the trolley wire of the electrically equipped mine and the contact of an iron bar or some other tool carried by men with the trolley wire.

"It may be a little late to mention this now, after the horse is out of the stable, but I called attention to these safety precautions several years ago," Mr. Wardlaw said.

Hauling powder in trips carrying miners is contrary to mining laws. It is claimed there was an agreement between the Delaware & Hudson Coal company and its employees which permitted this dangerous practice.

STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE ACTIVE IN BEHALF OF SOLDIERS

Has Several Methods of Keeping in Touch With Discharged Men and in Locating Vacancies.

HARRISBURG, June 9.—The Pennsylvania State Employment Service has put into operation several methods of following up the men who have been discharged from the service of the country, in order to procure employment for them. Applications from these men are received at the various offices of the service in several ways. In one case, the men in camp who are about to be discharged, all in cards which are taken to the camp by representatives of the United States Employment Service. These cards give the name of the soldier, his home address, the character of the work which he has hitherto performed and the work he is desirous of obtaining.

These cards are forwarded to the Pennsylvania State Employment Service for distribution to the offices nearest the homes of the applicant. The superintendents of these offices have received instructions to follow up each applicant, find out whether he has secured employment and if he had not, to make immediate efforts to secure employment for him. The superintendents do this by sending out a form letter in which the soldier is asked to answer certain questions; amongst others, whether he has received the job he had worked at before entering the service? Whether he had secured employment elsewhere, and if he desired us to continue our efforts to find employment for him? Upon receipt of answers to these questions, they take such steps as are necessary in accordance herewith.

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Notwithstanding the depression in the industrial world entailing a diminution in the working forces in all industries, the employers have strained a point to take on one or more discharged men and thus assist in keeping the promises made to them before entering the service. To secure the cooperation of employers in the matter of obtaining openings for discharged soldiers, there were

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sent out through the various offices of the service, thousands of form letters asking them how many men they could use, the kind of work, the wages and the hours. The responses to these letters have been cordial and gratifying, and as soon as an order for men is received at an office of the service, applicants who have not as yet been placed, are referred to the employer.

The particular order may not be such work as that for which the applicant has applied, but it is offered him and if for any reason he refuses to accept it, his application is kept alive until such time as an order is received for the work which he is desirous of obtaining. In this manner over 4,800 men received employment through this branch of the state government during the month of May 1919.

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